

Megiddo Message



A Pilgrim Father Speaks

November 19, 1955

Volume 42, Number 24

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The Megiddo Message

November 19, 1955 Volume 42, No. 24

Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone, THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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- Please notify promptly of any change of address.

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"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding: for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. . . . Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life."

—Proverbs 3: 13, 14; 4: 13.

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Letters

Maranatha—The Hope that Keeps the Christian Working!

Dear Sister:

Truly, the day of the Lord's coming is nearer than ever before. The word *Maranatha* certainly thrilled the hearts of those early Christians. It was their only hope.

So with us if we are to succeed in our undertaking. More so, since we stand at the threshold of its fulfillment. Then, too, our trials are not to be compared to theirs. Yet they endured all. No trial was too great for those faithful ones to bear.

If the Apostle Paul could say, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," what will our trials seem like some day? Less than nothing!

Clarkson, Ontario

M. E. W.

Letters are Like a Personal Visit

Dear Sister:

Receiving letters like yours makes me feel like a friend of Jesus had been here, telling us of the good work that must be done to gain salvation.

People nowadays just can't find enough amusement. They want to be on the go all the time. But if they would sit down in their homes with the family, and the Book called the Bible, they would soon be busy enjoying the good works of Jesus, and at the same time be bettering themselves.

Edgar, Wisconsin

Mrs. M. R.

THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE Reveals the True Light

Dear Friends:

THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE means very much to me as it has showed me the true light on many subjects.

Blackwater, Va.

K. R.

Rev. L. T. Nichols' Books Cannot be Faulted

Dear Friend:

I have read several of the books and must say they are the best I have ever read. I believe they cannot be faulted.

Warwick, Australia

T. B.

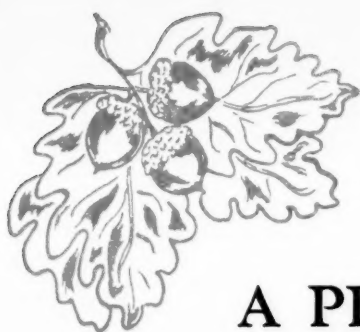
OBITUARY

ANTON RAFFAI

Anton Raffai of Lestock, Saskatchewan, Canada, fell asleep in death on Oct. 17, 1955, at the age of 80 years.

Mr. Raffai had been a devoted reader of THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE since 1948. He is survived by his wife, four sons and four daughters.

To those who mourn we extend the Bible hope of a resurrection and a better life beyond, which hope is "an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast."



... after three hundred years

A PILGRIM FATHER SPEAKS

The Thanksgiving Message for 1955

O YE that have looked upon my silent picture, framed here so many years as the symbol of Thanksgiving—Hear my message to you! For the time has come when I would speak. And, of course, as you might expect at this time of year, it is about Thanksgiving. Thankfulness, methinks, is a blessed virtue that can add sweetness to many a cup and can strengthen the heart for many a trial.

Let me tell you of our own first Thanksgiving and how it came to be celebrated. But, just in case you have been so busy enjoying the many blessings in this favored land that you have forgotten your history, I shall give you a brief outline of the experiences of the Pilgrims.

With a strong desire for freedom to worship God as we saw fit, we set sail for the Virginia Colony in America. We bought one small ship, the *Speedwell*, in Holland, and hired the *Mayflower* in London.

We had no sooner set sail in the open sea when the *Speedwell* was found to be so leaky that we had to return for repairs, not once but twice. This second time we deserted the *Speedwell* as unsafe and set out all compacted (102 souls) in the *Mayflower*, from Plymouth, England. Alas, we had now lost valuable time and a fair wind so that we were forced to breast the mighty ocean at a season of violent winds and heaving billows. It was cold and bitter aboard and many were seasick. Some died. When after long sailing, we sighted land it was not the prospect of the cabins of our hoped for destination in Jamestown which greeted our weary eyes, but a bleak and desolate northern wilderness behind a rock-bound shore.

The desperate plight of our little band can scarcely be imagined, for behind us lay the vast impassable ocean; before us the hideous and inhospitable wilderness. We had not a sufficient store of supplies to tide us until a crop could be hoped for. The natives were very hostile and, it seemed, were more ready to fill our sides full of arrows than to offer any sort of assistance. Indeed circumstances grew so straitened that at one time all but five or six of our number were ill. By spring more than half had died!

I have recounted all these things to you that you may remember at this Thanksgiving season all the notable sufferings and travail that made possible your happy land of freedom and of plenty.

But our perseverance was rewarded, for our destinies took a happy turn with the summer season. The virgin soil, which had lain idle, gathering fertility, brought forth in great abundance. We made friends with the Indians who gave us no small service in bringing game, fish and fowl. The prospect so brightened by harvest time

that the good Governor proclaimed a feast of Thanksgiving and praise to God. You can scarcely realize the great feeling of joy and thankfulness that filled our hearts. We thanked God for food, for health, for homes and protection, for each other as friends and fellow pilgrims. After so many and great hardships we were thankful for everything about us. Even little things took on a deep and beautiful meaning. Our blessings seemed so great we could hardly comprehend them, for above all there shone at last the cherished light of freedom. That hope so long held dear was ours at last. We could worship God unmolested, according to the dictates of our own conscience.

So you see, Thanksgiving Day means more than just a merry meal, more than pumpkin pie or roast turkey and cranberries. It means that tyranny can no longer suffocate right purpose. It means an expressed recognition that no organization can force its doctrines upon the helpless people. It is symbolic of a great heritage of freedom.

Our nation has grown from the humble but sterling beginning to become the most favored land in all the history of the world. How happy I am to see the great progress it is making in material things. But as I have viewed and heard from my framed picture abode, I wonder—Are you thankful for the freedom for which I and my fellow pilgrims fought and suffered? Do I hear murmurings as you enjoy the blessings and conveniences which you consider so common, yet so necessary, so vital to your life—blessings which we never dreamed of, blessings ever increasing, blessings so new that even your own grandparents knew them not?

We lived in tiny cabins with earthen floors. We used furniture of our own make and huddled about an open hearth for warmth. You dwell in fine houses, full of marvelous conveniences, and I am glad you do. It seems your homes should be continually aglow with thankfulness and happiness—but I wonder. We walked through mud and snow. You transport yourselves in the elegant though common luxury of marvelous automobiles. We carried water in buckets our own hands had made. You can have water, hot or cold, at the turn of a tap in any weather. We made open lamps or candles for a flickering light. You flood your rooms with light at the magic touch of a button.

These are but a very, very few of the basic things I behold, and are you *thankful*? Do you appreciate them? When I behold the great flood of scientific progress in every field, I am amazed and can hardly take it in, it is so wonderful. Are you thankful?

Friend, I cannot tarry long and so I must be frank. I
(Continued on page 6)

The Blood of the Everlasting Covenant

THE quest of all ages, the desire of all mankind, has been for life—more of life than this brief and transitory existence affords. This inherent longing has sent explorers to the ends of the earth in search of the tree of life, and again for the fountain of eternal youth. It has sent scientists delving deep into the mysteries of chemistry to find, if they might, the elixir of life.

But all efforts have met with frustration, disappointment, despair. The coveted life has not been found in the test tube, nor in the realm of mortal exploration. Death remains very real and very active—plucking without discrimination from the human stage the great and the small, the rich and the poor, the innocent and the guilty, the revered and the despised.

Such is the folly of all human speculation and effort when God Almighty is omitted from the picture.

But with God as Guide, the quest of the ages has a vastly different ending. He leads us to the door of an open sepulcher, at whose portals stands Christ, His beloved Son, with this message: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. 1:18). Here the quest of the ages climaxes in victory. In Christ's resurrection we have full assurance that there is life beyond death.

If we can ascertain the means by which He escaped the clutches of death, and follow the identical course, we too can hope to arrive at the identical end, there to exclaim with Him, "I AM ALIVE FOR EVERMORE."

Thanks be unto God, Christ's means of life beyond death is no secret; it is revealed in the Book of books. "GOD... BROUGHT AGAIN FROM THE DEAD OUR LORD JESUS... THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT" (Heb. 13:20).

The avenue to life beyond death is well marked. It is "through the blood of the everlasting covenant." But this phraseology is deep and requires careful analysis.

What is the Everlasting Covenant?

The Bible makes reference to two different covenants which God has made with man (Gal. 4:24). They differ widely in duration, and in purpose. However, the religious world at large fails to distinguish between them, and in confusing the two covenants is misled to believe that the literal blood shed on Calvary avails to their salvation, as we shall see.

One covenant is "everlasting," or binding throughout the entire day of salvation. It is better known as the Law of Faith. The divine stipulation, as revealed to Abraham, was, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect," and for this perfect walk the Almighty promised to Abraham and his seed this earth for an everlasting possession (Gen. 17:1-8). That covenant has never been disannulled; it is binding upon Christians today, as re-stated by Christ: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

The other covenant was simply a temporary instrument, the Mosaic Law, given for the purpose of governing Israel while she existed as a nation. When the kingdom of Israel was overthrown and the Jews scattered,

they had no further need for a civil or national law. God's spokesmen required that it be abolished.

The limits of that Mosaic Law are well defined in the Scriptures. Galatians 3:19 teaches that it was added to the Law of Faith until, and only until, Christ should come. Hebrews 8:13 describes the Mosaic Law as "that which decayeth and waxeth old," as an obsolete instrument, which was "ready to vanish away." Paul in Second Corinthians 3 marks its final end. The entire chapter is devoted to a comparison between the two covenants, and in verse 11 we read, "If that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." At the time of writing, Paul referred to the Mosaic Law as "that which is done away." Only the more glorious Law of Faith, or "everlasting covenant," remained.

Why was the Law of Faith more glorious than the Mosaic Law? It was "established upon better promises" (Heb. 8:6). The Law of Faith promises eternal life to its supporters; whereas the Mosaic Law protected simply this present life, as does the law of our land today. Repeatedly the Bible teaches the Mosaic Law controlled simply the outward actions; it exercised no government over the deep intents of the heart, and therefore had no power to justify men and women in the sight of God. "The law made nothing perfect." "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Heb. 7:19; Gal. 2:16).

Literal sacrifice had its place under the Mosaic Law. The offering of living animals was required. However, this gesture had no power to remit sin, as Hebrews 10 makes plain: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. . . . For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (verses 1, 4).

If the Almighty has no pleasure in literal blood, if it is absolutely ineffective to remit sin, are we safe in relying upon the literal blood of Christ to cleanse us from sin? *Are we safe?* Consider well!

We have proved that only the "everlasting covenant" is in force today, the Mosaic Law having ceased by limitation at the time of Christ. If we attempt to retain literal sacrifice, whether in the form of a lamb upon the ancient Hebrew altars or Christ upon Calvary—the blood is equally as literal—we place ourselves under the old covenant which is no longer in force, and which, when it did exist, had no power to take away sin, to make perfect, or to give life eternal.

What is the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant?

Our purpose as stated at the onset is to discover the means by which Christ secured eternal life, that we, by following in His steps, may live eternally with Him. We have found His avenue to life to be through the "blood of the everlasting covenant" of which the Mosaic Law was only a type or shadow (Heb. 10:1).

The Mosaic Law with its literal sacrifices typified the spiritual sacrifice under the new covenant. The new covenant sacrifice is fully described in Psalm 51:17, "The

sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Dr. Moffatt renders it, "God's sacrifice is a soul with its evil crushed: a heart broken with penitence never wilt thou despise."

If the new covenant sacrifice is spiritual, as the Psalmist describes it, then the blood must likewise be spiritual. We cannot dispense with literal sacrifice and retain literal blood. As in the type the literal slaying produced literal blood, so in the antitype the spiritual slaying produces spiritual blood. "God's sacrifice is a soul with its evil crushed." Crushing out the evil, subduing natural impulses and desires, slaying them until they are so lifeless that the strongest temptation arouses no instinctive reaction, causes the spiritual blood to flow out and the old life to expire. This is the blood of the everlasting covenant, the death to sin, the means by which Christ secured life eternal.

Religious leaders assert that Christ was born perfect and had no struggle with an evil nature. No! How then could He have been an adequate example to us who are beset within and without with all manner of evil?

According to the Scriptures, Christ was made in all things like His brethren, tempted in all points like as we, superior only in that He never transgressed after He knew the law (Heb. 2: 17; 4: 15; 5: 8). His conflict with sin was as real, as intense, as ours. We read that He never spoke His own words, He never did His own will, He never pleased Himself (John 14: 24; 6: 38; Rom. 15: 3). All such action, diametrically opposed to His nature, was not without the shedding of blood—the blood of the everlasting covenant, the blood which ultimately raised Him from the clutches of death to life immortal.

There are certain specific instances in which we see Him crushing out the evil with might and main, in the process of rendering that lifelong sacrifice which God will never despise. At twelve years of age He was qualified intellectually to be about His "Father's business," and, thinking His time had come, He lingered in Jerusalem to discuss with the doctors of the law. However, at the rebuke from His mother, He turned His face again toward Nazareth where He remained for eighteen years, "subject to his parents." This, we can be certain, was not without the shedding of blood when He sensed keenly the world's need of the wisdom which He alone could impart. But greater was His personal need for the wisdom which He had yet to acquire.

Reflection takes us to an early scene of His public ministry, when five thousand people had been fed from five barley loaves and two small fishes. The people, perceiving Him to be a prophet, prepared to take Him by force and make Him king. "Breathes there a man with soul so dead" as not to quicken at the prospect of such honor? But Jesus neither sought nor stooped to the honor of men. Perceiving the intent of the clamorous throng, He departed from their midst to be alone with God in the mountain.

Again, He was informed that His mother and brethren stood without, desiring to speak with Him. Anyone who knows the natural tie of fond affection which runs from son to mother can realize the struggle which Christ may have encountered and the blood which He shed at that hour. Impulse would surely have sent Him speeding to her side to clasp her in His embrace. But obligation kept Him with His disciples until He had assured them of their place in His family—that of mother, brother and

sister—upon condition that they heard the Word of God and kept it (Matt. 12: 50; Luke 8: 20, 21; 11: 27, 28).

Momentous in that life of unexcelled sacrifice was His ordeal in Gethsemane where in the face of cruel death He articulated those immortal words, "Not my will, but thine, be done." This was not without the crushing of natural desire, the shedding of blood. It was there that He wrung out the last drops of His sacrifice, for the test of Calvary was virtually won in Gethsemane.

He submitted to crucifixion rather than to deny His future kingship, a basic principle of His teaching. And thus closed a life of the most heroic suffering that this earth has ever seen.

But it did not end there. The blood of the everlasting covenant, that blood which He had poured out His whole life through, in sacrifice to the Almighty, became the power to unlock the tomb and raise Him to life forevermore.

This same avenue to life beyond death is opened to us and well marked in the Scriptures. We read, "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him" (II Tim. 2: 11). The death which gave life to Christ is identical with that which will give life to us. We shall live with Him if now we die with Him. Can this death imply the Calvary crucifixion on a Roman cross? No intelligent person would form such a conclusion. It is the daily death to sin.

Peter reinforces this same grand principle. We read, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Pet. 2: 21). Can this possibly refer to His physical suffering on Calvary? If so, we must follow His steps to literal crucifixion. But no! As His suffering was lifelong, so likewise must ours be. He did not suffer in our stead, or to free us from suffering, but to teach us how, to show us the way to life beyond death.

The close parallel between His suffering and ours is shown in First Peter 4: 1, 2, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." Did it not bring mental suffering for Christ to align His mind perfectly with the Father's in every circumstance of life? He was no weak and spineless creature, but a man possessed of strong desire, subject to like temptation which we experience from day to day; yet He suffered the death of all desire which conflicted with His Father's superior purposes. "Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind"—but not without suffering, not without blood, can the task be accomplished.

No inspired writer speaks with more clarity concerning the purpose of Christ's lifelong death to sin, nor employs more force in appealing to Christians to give themselves up to this same death than does the Apostle Paul. His personal testimony is oft repeated throughout his Epistles.

To the Corinthians he wrote: "I die daily" (I Cor. 15: 31).

And again, We always bear "about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." Why the suffering and the pain, the blood and the tears? "... that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mor-

(Continued on page 6)



THANKSGIVING DAYS—Old and New

THE secret of all true contentment is revealed in these words, which should be written in the mind of every Christian, to "in everything give thanks," "and by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." The cultivation of a thankful spirit is at all times commanded of every one who ever expects in that auspicious Day to behold the King in His beauty and witness that glorious harvest when the clusters are gathered in. If we are unthankful for the temporal, how can God give us the eternal? And if we ignore present blessings, how can we expect the true riches to be bestowed upon us?

We are mistaken in believing that Thanksgiving days had their origin with either the Pilgrims or the Puritans. We shall not question but that the Pilgrims had abundant cause for thanksgiving at the sight of Cape Cod, and that the rocky shores were a grateful relief after a voyage of 67 days. Weak, weary, poorly armed, scantily provisioned, without shelter were they when they landed at last on the ice-clad rocks of Plymouth. Why all this suffering and privation? History says: "To break from off their necks the shackles of their homeland; to enjoy religious freedom."

If Thanksgiving Day should be a festival of religious liberty, who has a greater privilege to enjoy that freedom than this people, called of God in these last days? A freedom from error, darkness, and superstition; a liberty that reaches through the ages to come, even the glorious liberty of the sons of God! May the spirit of the Psalmist fill us. He said, "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name."

Back through history special thanksgiving days were numerous among God's people. Among notable ones was the "Feast of Tabernacles," an annual thanksgiving, not simply in memory of ancestral favors but for the ingathering of the harvest. Nothing can be conceived more beautiful than the manner of its observance. Booths were erected in the open air, with branches from the palms and willows, within which the families were gathered to sit together before the Lord. So the occasion was sacred

to the reunion of friends, the interchange of kindnesses, the expression of generous reward for the stranger, the widow, the fatherless. Nor was it right for an Israelite so much as to taste of an ear of parched corn or bread of the new harvest till the nation had borne a sheaf of barley or wheat and waved it before the Lord. It is truly a beautiful picture which the imagination paints of that national spectacle, when the feast of the vine and olive caused the Children of Israel to flow together unto the court of God with chanting of psalms and waving of sheaf and branch.

But when did the sun ever look down upon a people more blest than we? living in the time that prophets and sages longed to see; living in a country where Truth might prosper; a land unknown and undreamed of when the Hebrew feasts were instituted; more blessed than any other people who ever embraced the oracles of God; living in homes of health and comfort; gathering in the golden wealth of the fields; living in the cool of the day. May God incline us more and more to that unselfish, contented, cheerful, thankful temper, which is always a medicine and a feast and a protection.

To millions this material festival is merely for the overflow of the animal spirit. We should rejoice with thanksgiving today because we have a table from which the world have no right to eat; a table filled with dainties and covered with numberless sweets, which we can eat and enjoy before we reach the Promised Land. Unthankful indeed would we be to forget the increase God has given His Word since our last festival of Thanksgiving. It was the Psalmist who said, "I will sing unto the Lord because He hath dealt bountifully with me. Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation."

We may reach out today to endeavor to find some great thing for which to be thankful and forget many things we seldom think of. We hardly pause to count the blessing of having all of our five senses. Can we picture the expression which must have spread over the face of blind Bartimæus at the moment when his sight was restored by Christ? And, yet, we have never known what it is

to be blind. We do not even pause to consider how great a benefit is healthful sleep, when after some exceptionally hard day we retire to rest almost too tired to pray. In the morning the waste is supplied; that which was weary has been restored and we rise as a strong man to run a race. We descend from our bed-chamber with hardly a thought of gratitude for the use of our limbs and senses. We need only to pause and comprehend the joy of the man healed at the Gate Beautiful by the Apostle. He ran and leaped and praised God; his ankles received strength and he sprang up, jumping and running in the use of his new-found liberty. And yet we have had the use of our limbs for our whole life. The bare mention of water which we drink, the water in which we bathe! We waste it, we despise it, we count it among the cheapest things, yet it is one of the greatest blessings and wonders of God's laboratory. I do not wonder Jacob cried out, "I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies and of all thy truth."

The "Harvest Home" of God is rapidly approaching with plenty and joy to every Christian, but let us ever remember that to gather even a literal harvest a great work must be done. There must be the breaking up of the ground; the ripping open of the sod so the sunshine and rain may enter; the tearing up of the roots that sap the life from the ground; and cultivation must pass over and over it again before the harvest. So in the spiritual the ground must be prepared with great care. It cannot be plowed in wickedness if ever we expect to reap in mercy. Every inch of the fallow ground must be broken up that the rain of righteousness may be absorbed. The instrument God uses for cultivation must pass over it many times, even though it sometimes seems cruel. Not only that, but if the harvest be plenteous it must be sown in tears. Some may associate tears with misery, but not so. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." Tears are the seed of a joyful harvest, if they flow from a contrite heart. If the sowing is to the flesh, the harvest will be corruption. We may think our plant will grow without the water of life and the cultivation God uses; in the morning for a little while it may apparently seem to flourish, but in the day when the Great Reaper arrives the harvest will be a heap of grief and desperate sorrow.

Blessings are falling on every hand, but we need not delude ourselves or any other man with the false promise of a smooth and easy passage to the City whose builder and maker is God. Ofttimes it has been with us as with the Children of Israel; they expected a quick and short passage into the land of promise. So have we. They were impatient over obstacles and murmured aloud because of delays. So have we. They were forged and hammered into shape and strength. So must we be. As the Egyptians followed them to return them again to bondage, so we have enemies many and strong, striving to draw us back, hindering our progress. Too oft we have sat down to eat and risen up to play, crying for flesh, when the bread of heaven lay about the camp on every side. Many, because of a faint heart, have turned again to their taskmasters; others have been cut down by the enemy, while sleeping on guard. We have seen high ones prove disloyal, detaching themselves from the true leaders, joining themselves with idolaters, by whom many were deceived. The waters which were given for refreshment have oft been turned into bitterness. Spies have come back, bearing an evil report to intimidate and deter by false stories

of giants, foes and high fortresses. But above us, around us, behind us is a power mightier than all, bearing us onward, sometimes in suffering, oftentimes in chastisement; onward, still onward, toward the promise God has given.

We know the day is not far distant when the household murmuring and disloyal ones shall be punished; those who have turned to their idols will be made to drink the ashes of the calf they worshiped. And though yet there is between us and the promised possession a river deeper, swifter than Jordan; though our Moses has fallen asleep and many a soldier and priest may not see that for which he fought and prayed; though many in this generation because of unbelief shall be buried in the wilderness, yet the river will be crossed and some of this people will go over dry-shod, bearing the Ark of God. The day of universal jubilee shall surely come. Every year bears this people nearer to its promised Sabbath. "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass. . . . In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. . . . His name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name forever. And let the whole earth be filled with his glory."

Blessings, How They Come!

Temporal blessings, Lord, Thou givest,
Blessings mortals ne'er could earn;
On the sinner and the righteous,
If they hearken, or they spurn.
From the morning's early dewdrop
Till the last faint rays of day
Mercies from Thee never do stop—
They are with us all the way.

And when shades of night are o'er us,
Then Thy hand is outstretched still,
Arranging circumstances for us
While the stars obey Thy will.
Fall and Winter; Spring and Summer—
As the seasons come and go—
Thou providest for us. None are
Ever slighted here below.

For the things of this life given,
Hearts and voices swell in praise
To Thee, gracious God of Heaven,
Great Preserver of our days.
But to us the dearest treasure
Given by Thy hand of love,
Given in unstinted measure,
Is Thy Word, sent from above.

Thus, our Father, at this season
We would thank Thee o'er and o'er;
For we have the greatest reason—
Blessings now, and held in store
To be giv'n at the returning
Of our Lord, to reign on earth.
Then the saints, for that day yearning,
Shall receive the Spirit birth.

—L. L. S.

THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

(Continued from page 3)

tal flesh. . . . Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus" (II Cor. 4: 10, 11, 14).

To the Galatians he wrote: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live" (2: 20).

To the Philippians: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, . . . that I may win Christ, . . . that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3: 7, 8, 10, 11). Life beyond death was Paul's pre-eminent desire, and he sought it, he bled for it in the renunciation of "all things" of his pharisaic past—"being made conformable unto Christ's death."

In the last of his Epistles, his second letter to Timothy, he concluded his personal testimony with, "The last drops of my own sacrifice are falling. . . . I have fought a good fight, I have run my course, I have kept the faith" (II Tim. 4: 7, 8, Moffatt). Only the last drops of his personal sacrifice assured him the crown of life at Christ's return.

Romans 6 might be considered the key chapter in its clarity of expressing the relationship between Christ's work and ours. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him [Christ], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. . . . Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him . . . for in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin. . . . For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. 6: 6, 8, 10, 11, 5). Here we have parallel crucifixion—"our old man is crucified with him"; parallel death—"if we be dead with Christ"; and, ultimately, parallel life—"we shall also live with him."

If Christ's death on Calvary is in any measure effective, need we die from day to day, pouring out the life of all our earthward hopes and aspirations in the form of blood? Repeatedly the inspired writers affirm that the death is ours to die, the blood to shed, the life to gain.

Whatever text you may read concerning the sin offering, remember Romans 12: 1, and know that it is made in none other way than by offering your body a living sacrifice. Wherever you read of the sufferings of Christ in your behalf, remember First Peter 2: 21, and know that His suffering was for the purpose of example that you should follow His steps. Whenever you read of His death, and are tempted to entertain any lingering hope that it relieves you of a single moral obligation, remember Romans 6, and know that you must die with Him if ever the blood of the everlasting covenant is applied to release you from the clutches of death to life eternal.

In conclusion, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

A PILGRIM FATHER SPEAKS

(Continued from page 1)

am deeply moved, for it seems that a sad state is creeping over this favored land. Indeed, it seems the greater the blessings the less they are appreciated. I behold America—America the beautiful and bountiful, America the blessed and favored—full of violence, waste, wantonness and corruption. Is this to be the condition of our much-sought land of freedom? Freedom, my friend, is not license; liberty is not abuse!

It is so very sad and astonishing to behold the prevalence of irreligion, for religion was the core and backbone of our life. We lived and bled for it. We suffered and died for it. We read our Bibles to feed our souls, to strengthen our minds, and to enrich our lives. We read them for duty and diversion and that made us a happier, healthier people. And, take my advice, it would make you a happier, wiser and better nation today.

I have been appalled to observe the growing unthankfulness mentioned by the chiefest of our Lord's Apostles, the fearless, courageous Paul. He wrote a text we attached little importance to in our day but it fits your nation today like a waistcoat. It was on this wise, that in the last great days men should be surrounded by perilous times, times full of danger, beset with disobedient children. They would be unthankful and unholy; and they would love pleasure far more than they would love God. The *unthankfulness* of your people is so noticeable at a season professing to celebrate your *thankfulness*.

Scientifically you have made, to us, unimaginable progress; but morally, spiritually and socially—shall I say it?—you have retrograded just as unimaginably!

Your womenfolks and their dress, or—I am ashamed to say—their *undress*! Not for an hour would we have tolerated upon our streets such exposed forms of womankind! Not for a minute would my wife, my mother, my sister, my daughter, have emerged from her private room in such shameful, disgraceful attire—so unchristian! How can your nation maintain any honor with its womanhood by example supporting no higher standard? That, my friends, is a contributing factor to the shocking and revolting state of juvenile delinquency that stigmatizes your progress.

These must be the terrible days which the Bible foretold should come, when the *good man* should have perished out of the earth, when they should do evil with both hands earnestly. True, there were evil men in our time but, my! my! I think they did it with only one finger to what is going on in your time.

I behold America sinking in the mire of immorality and so full of crime that she leads the world with her record and grows worse continually.

If America would return to the true and living God, she would not need to fear the monstrous weapons of any enemy, the pall of which now hangs like a black fog over all this glory.

I am very sad about our nation, for in a deep and beautiful way it seems that what we had, though very simple, was better. And so I will say, Farewell, for I find my picture of the pilgrim spirit of thankfulness and consideration a far more pleasant atmosphere in which to dwell.

Remember us on Thanksgiving Day. It might do you good!

The Mirror

DID you look into the mirror this morning? I am confident you did, when you shaved, combed your hair and arranged your tie. The mirror's silvery depths reflected your image as you appear outwardly, and you saw yourself as you would like to have others see you.

But did you look into *the* Mirror, the one which reflects the hidden man of the heart?

You would not think of beginning the day without first making yourself presentable, and while doing so you would refer to the mirror frequently to verify your efforts to that end.

How much more important it is to look into the Mirror which reveals the thoughts and intents of the heart, the emotions and motives which produce either a happy, hopeful, joyous countenance, or a gloomy, disgruntled one!

A look into that Mirror tells us that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," and that we can "have no confidence in the flesh."

Another look shows us the warning: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding," also, "Let not thine heart envy sinners, but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long." Then, too, it shows us the way to keep in the fear of the Lord all the day long, which is to let our constant prayer be: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer."

If we look into the depths of this Mirror still further, we shall see that the natural man is "full of wounds" of evil, "and bruises, and putrifying sores." In its depths will also be found the remedy for all these disfiguring conditions: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well." "He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions."

This Mirror of Truth has an X-ray quality of the keenest perception when operated by an expert technician. By its means the deadly evils within the heart are revealed, the very first being "evil thoughts," the embryo which, if nurtured, produces its kind in word and act. If we wish to know what kind of men we are and see ourselves as God sees us, we must be willing to have its all-searching rays thrown upon us from every angle that it may reveal each blemish or rough spot, so that we may be worked upon until we become a polished shaft in the Master's quiver.

We may look into the literal mirror every day of our life, yes, many times a day, but we become no better looking by so doing. On the contrary, we are reminded by the gray hairs and wrinkles of the rapid advance of old age, of decay and death which is gradually stealing upon us. But how different is the daily, yes, momentary use of the Mirror of Truth! As we study ourselves in the light of its reflection, our "leanness" becomes less apparent; we begin to grow "fat and flourishing."

If we would renew our youth, if we would have the King "greatly increase our beauty," let us continue to look into this "perfect law of liberty" until, looking, we shall behold His image reflected therein. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

November 19, 1955

Musings of the Editor

SMOG—Literal and Spiritual

THE smog that is becoming of increasing concern to some of our modern cities is but typical of the obscurity and air pollution that has contaminated the spiritual atmosphere for centuries.

Smog is an undesirable condition. It endangers health, damages plant growth, increases corrosion of metals, is harmful even to certain kinds of building stone. It adds materially to the cost of household maintenance in affected areas and adds to the general discomfort of the citizenry. The low visibility caused by smog is not only an annoyance but is dangerous to drivers and pedestrians alike.

Spiritual smog is even more baneful. It endangers spiritual health, damages spiritual growth, is blinding to spiritual sight and retards spiritual progress on the highway of life.

The Psalmist says, "I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes." Had he lived in our time he might have said in the "smog."

We, too, are as the bottle, encased in obscurity, that is, not observed by the world.

In ancient times a bottle signified a wineskin, or skin sack suitable for holding liquids; or it might have been an earthen bottle (Jer. 19: 1).

If we are really a bottle or wineskin in the midst of the darkness that engrosses the world, and keep the commandments, we shall be filled with the wine of truth.

To become like a bottle in the smoke is a most desirable condition, "with God shut in and all the world shut out!"

The worldliness, the pleasure loving, the greed and selfishness, the religious indifference that pollutes the air, make difficult breathing for the Christian and he prefers to be in the bottle with a tight cork or stopper lest the "poison" from the surrounding atmosphere infiltrate with disastrous effects.

GAIN PEACE OF MIND

Reaffirm your faith in God as your Creator and Protector. Ask for strength to endure conditions beyond your control, and wisdom to correct matters that are within your control.

Determine right now that you are going to achieve this. Substitute activity for worry and discouragement. Physical as well as mental activity leaves little time or reason for evil thoughts.

Accept with grace whatever befalls you, and profit from each experience. Set goals for yourself; in other words, have a purpose. Strive toward this goal, and peace will be a part of your success.

Doubt cramps energy. Belief is power.

You will never see driftwood floating upstream.

To speak truth, a man must not only have the martial courage which goes out, with sound of drum and trumpet, to do and suffer great things; but the domestic courage which compels him to utter small sounding truths in spite of present inconvenience and outraged sensitiveness or sensibility.



Meditations On the Word

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope" (Romans 15: 4).

A plain statement: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning!" Have we learned them? The rank and file of professing Christians have not; to them the Bible is an unfamiliar book. Beyond perhaps the Twenty-third Psalm, the Lord's Prayer, John 3:16, John 14:1, 2, they have little Scriptural knowledge.

Paul commanded Timothy, his son in the faith, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2: 15). Studiousness was a *must* with Timothy.

Jesus advocated, "Search the Scriptures" (John 5: 39).

In support of the belief that the things written aforetime must be learned, we observe that the Israelites were commanded to teach the law of God diligently to their children. They were to talk of the words given through their Lawgiver, Moses, when they sat in their houses, and when they walked by the way. They were to bind them for a sign upon their hand, and as frontlets between their eyes; the words of God's law were to be written upon the doorposts of their houses and upon their gates.

In the Proverbs of King Solomon, similar demands were made: "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments. . . . Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart. . . . Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Prov. 3: 1, 3, 5).

By the time of Augustine (A. D. 354—430), many errors and abuses had crept into the Church, but Augustine still held to the need for study of the Sacred Oracles. He considered it binding upon Christian parents to teach the Bible to their children, advocating that children seven or eight years old should memorize passages of Scripture.

Our meditation verse lists one valid reason for learning the things written aforetime: only in that way can we have hope. Above all we hope for endless life. Apart from life all other blessings would be valueless, for only through life are we able to enjoy them. It was the hope of a better life that impelled Abraham to obey the Lord's command to leave his native land and kin, and migrate to a strange country. It was the hope of everlasting life that impelled Joseph to adhere strictly to the law of God as a slave in a heathen land, and still retain his poise when raised to a position of virtual ruler in that land.

Love of life was the magnet that drew such outstanding men as Moses, Samuel, King David, King Hezekiah, the Prophet Daniel, the Apostle Paul, yes, even Jesus Himself, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, that He might obtain the more abundant life. This promise of life is beautifully ex-

pressed in Psalm 133: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore."

Paul said it was through patience and comfort of the Scriptures that we have hope, and Peter explains that "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" come to us "through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (II Pet. 1: 3); knowledge—the product of learning.

But to possess any real value, our belief must be based upon the teaching of the Scriptures. The program the Bible reveals for the fulfillment of the hope of immortal life in the new world is, first, *knowledge*: the "things written aforetime, were written for our learning." Then, *belief*, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Gal. 3: 6). Then *acceptance*; when the law of God was read to the Israelites, they were to say: "All that the Lord hath said we will do, and be obedient" (Num. 24: 7). Then the *doing* must follow. But even then the hope still is incomplete. We "which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8: 23). After keeping the law of God inviolate we still bear the image of the earthy, are still subject to accident, disease and death; we wait for Christ to come from heaven and raise the dead, to judge His servants, both living and resurrected, and bestow our reward of immortality. That is the great hope we find in the Scriptures.

Over the ages men have entertained other hopes than these, and still cling to false hopes. Nearly all primitive peoples had some concept of continued life after death. They considered death a transition, a migration from a lower to a higher plane. This concept was exemplified in the primitive belief of the American Indian. His conception of a future life was that after death he would go to the "Happy hunting-ground" where wild game in abundance would provide perpetual food and pleasurable pastime for him. But the Bible contradicts this: "The living know that they shall die, but the dead know not anything" (Eccl. 9: 5).

Civilized man, relying solely upon wishful thinking for proof, adopted the belief of his primitive ancestors of life immediately after death, and has come to believe that he possesses an immortal soul, or a life principle that survives the death of the body. But, we repeat, the Bible hope is that after Resurrection and Judgment worthy mortals shall "put on immortality," bringing to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory!"

Your Questions Answered



BIBLICAL PERSONAL CURRENT

Do you have a question? Personal replies will be sent to Biblical questions to any correspondent, and counsel will be offered on problems pertaining to the spiritual life. **THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE** will publish only the most helpful discussions for the benefit of other readers. No names shall be mentioned.

There are conflicting teachings by different churches about the coming Millennium. What does the Bible teach about it?

The Millennium is a period of 1,000 years (Rev. 20: 4) during which Christ and the saints will reign in peace and blessedness on the earth. The saints are composed of the faithful of the 6,000 years, the number of which is 144,000 (Rev. 14: 1). They receive their reward of life eternal at the second coming of Christ and, being made kings and priests, they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5: 9, 10).

After the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19: 19) the one third of humanity which submits to the rule of Christ (Zech. 13: 8, 9) will form the nucleus of the subjects which will multiply and replenish the earth until their number becomes as the sands of the sea. During this 1,000-year period the devil, which is sin and all sinners, shall be bound (Rev. 20: 2), that is, evil will not be allowed to manifest itself. After the 1,000 years all sinners will rally and manifest the wickedness of their hearts, only to be destroyed by the power of God (Rev. 20: 7—10). One eternal day of peace and happiness will follow.

In what way does the Lord call us now?

He speaks only through His Word. The Scriptures, says the Apostle, are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3: 16, 17). When the written Word was completed, then the former means of God's communication to man ceased. Among these were angelic visits, visions, Holy Spirit power, miracles. Thereafter the Word contained all of God's thoughts necessary for man's salvation.

God calls us through the message His Word contains; and when we read, understand, and agree to keep His sayings, we answer the call. (See Prov. 8: 1—10).

Does the narrow way of life which you prescribe bring you into disfavor with the world?

Yes. The way to life is narrow and unpopular as Jesus forewarned. Because the people of God would not lay one grain of incense upon the pagan altars they were always despised, and it is similar today. The moral standard of the true Christian is far above that of the world, and inasmuch as the worldlings do not like to see anyone live above them they are ready to revile and say all manner of evil against the morally pure. Our concern must be to do nothing that would cause God to be displeased with us. It is His favor that we seek. What the worldlings say does not matter. Jesus promised a blessing to such as would suffer in this manner (Matt. 5: 10—12), and the Apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Jesus' name (Acts 5: 41).

Do you believe in such things as haunted houses, ghosts, and noises caused by superhuman sources?

No, indeed not! How intelligent people believe this is more than we can perceive. Such beliefs are relics of heathenism, and superstitious folk are slow to get rid of

them. It is claimed that noises in "haunted houses" are caused by "departed spirits," or by the evil spirits. The Bible is very specific that the dead are silent in the grave and know nothing; and further, it disproves all claims that a literal devil and his angels exist, and are everywhere on earth causing trouble for mankind.

You will notice that the stories are that these haunted houses usually have been deserted for some time. Rats, insects, bats, occupy them and are ready for mischief when people move in again. These, besides the wind, heat, and cold, cause the mysterious noises.

It is interesting to note that in recent years scientists have made some unusual discoveries. They report some of the strangest habits among insects. For instance: "The deathwatch beetle, that stand-by of ghost stories laid in old castles, bumps its head on the top of its wooden tunnel to send a kind of telegraphic message to its mate."

—EDWIN WAY TEALE.

But science has not been able to locate any departed spirits or devils.

We read in Rev. 21: 14 that there are but twelve Apostles of the Lamb. Now the Eleven chose Matthias to replace Judas, and Jesus later chose Paul. This makes thirteen. Is there a contradiction?

No. The Eleven were commanded to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with the Holy Spirit (Luke 24: 49). Instead they acted impulsively, as Peter so often did, and cast lots for Matthias. The Apostles were Jesus' personal choice, and He appeared personally to Paul and appointed him for the position, as He did every Apostle before. Note Paul's own words: "not by men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1: 1). Matthias could not say this. While Matthias is no more mentioned since that event, Paul became the chiefest of the Apostles (II Cor. 11: 5). Paul says that he was the last of the Apostles, as one born out of due season (I Cor. 4: 9; 15: 8).

We read in Acts 16: 31, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." What is it to believe in Jesus?

To believe in Jesus is to believe all things which He proclaimed. As Peter said, "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me: him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you" (Acts 3: 22). Just to hear Jesus' words would not avail, for, as He said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." It is he who hears His sayings and does them that shall be saved. Read Matt. 7: 21—27. Therefore, to believe in Jesus is to accept every principle He taught and to keep all His commandments.

If all are descendants of Adam, whom did Cain marry?

Adam was not the first man God ever created on this earth. The very fact that Cain found his wife in the land of Nod proves there were other people.

Adam was simply the first of our race called into the vineyard (garden or church) of the Lord, the first of our race to make a covenant under the plan of salvation established for us.

The Almighty Creator of heaven and earth was not asleep through the long eternity past until just about 6,000 years ago. His mercy is "from everlasting to everlasting" (Ps. 103: 17). Hence, there must have been people upon whom to bestow that mercy.